

March 27, 2012

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RE: Raised Bill NO: 5553 "An Act of Concerning Substance Abuse Programs"

Mr. Chairman:

My testimony today endorses the Bill that is before you: I would like to make a particular plea regarding Section 4, the immediate reinstatement of the multiple offender drunken driving program, also known as 14-227f of the general statutes, which was repealed as of 12/31/2011.

I had the pleasure of working with the Commonwealth Group and the offenders who participated in this program. I must admit, I was skeptical when I began, but then saw many changes in the participants within the first weekend. The participants went from being angry that they had to be in this programs and that it was costing them so much money when they didn't even have a "drinking problem." This was during the first session – Friday night I saw resistance by the participants, however by the end of this 3 day intensive "workshop" many participants started to see, acknowledge and had a willingness to work on their underlying issues. We helped people to look at their behaviors and then give them the tools to change.


The team that the Commonwealth employed had a vast background and knowledge – some clinicians were certified as Drug & Alcohol Counselors, while other were licensed Social Worker, Counselors, Marriage & Family Therapist; there were also a few who were in long-term recovery – this added immensely to an incredible well-rounded team that focuses on long-term recovery. The team on Sunday would plan for each participant's aftercare, which typically included a minimum of one 12-Step program a week (with a sponsor), and a 13-week, weekly meeting sponsored by the Commonwealth Group.

I believe that this recent ignition lock law is just a band-aid for the very large psychosocial problem that therapy needs to be addressing.

Our State has a wonderful opportunity to help their residents with this insidious problem at NO COST TO OUR STATE. Our politicians have an opportunity to help their constituents by voting in favor of this program that is NO COST TO OUR STATE but addresses a major problem that puts many innocent state residents at-risk of being paralyzed or dieing at the cost of a drunk driver.

I am asking my state to **not** put a "band-aid" on this deadly problem but to support a solid program with noted positive results and to reinstate 12-227f of the General Statutes.

Thank you,


Mary A. Grabowski, MSW